

Western Perceptions of Eastern Romans

Undergraduate Research Thesis

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Introduction

Issues of Roman Identity: Western Perceptions of Eastern Romans

This thesis seeks to explore and interpret perceptions of eastern Romans from Latin political rhetoric produced by western authors. The study begins in 395 CE after the death of Theodosius, and continues through the reign of Justinian. The two sections provided below confront perceptions of eastern Romans through the authors Claudian and Sidonius. Although Claudian and Sidonius are writing at different time periods, they are both writing at a time when the Roman emperors are puppets for semi-barbaric leaders. Roman authors propagate to their audience that Roman culture continues to dominate, and particularly that western Romans are superior to even the eastern Romans. Claudian proclaims western dominance by asserted that the east is made effeminate by Eutropius, and therefore the eastern Romans defaulted to being subordinate to masculine westerners due to gender stereotypes. Sidonius inverts the feminizing stereotype declared by Claudian, but maintains the claim that the easterners were subordinate to the west. When compared to one another the pieces reveal the idea of a subordinate east, but contrast each other when providing evidence for why this is. Through these authors we are able to see the beginnings of negative ethnic labels that are applied to eastern Romans asserting western dominance.

Claudian: In Eutropium

Context

Claudian was born ca. 370 in Egypt and educated in Alexandria.¹ Since he was born in the eastern half of the empire, Claudian's native language was Greek and many of his early works were written in Greek. It was not until his arrival in Italy that he began to write poems in Latin. In 395 AD, he recited his first Latin poem in Rome and dedicated it to two brothers of the prestigious and powerful Anicii family, the consuls Probinus and Olybrius. Through their patronage, Claudian became the "official" poet of the western court of the Roman Empire, based in Milan, that same year.²

That year also saw the death of the emperor who had reunited the eastern and western halves of the Roman empire, Theodosius I. He was in fact to be the last emperor to rule over both halves of the Empire. Upon his death, he allegedly appointed Stilicho as regent for both of his heirs, his sons Honorius (to rule in the west) and Arcadius (to rule in the east). Conveniently, the announcement had been made without witnesses, leaving Stilicho the only man who had heard the emperor's final wishes. This claim was regarded with suspicion because Arcadius was eighteen at the time of his father's death, and, therefore, legally allowed to rule on his own.

When Claudian arrived at the court, it is likely that Stilicho was attempting to "convince the world at large that Theodosius really had declared him regent of both Honorius and Arcadius."³ Alan Cameron argues that Claudian must have been acting as Stilicho's propagandist when he wrote and recited his panegyric on the third consulship

¹ Cameron, *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the court of Honorius*, 2

² The Anicii were a senatorial family in Rome, and was the "leading Christian house in Rome" Cameron, *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the court of Honorius*, 30

³ Cameron, *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the court of Honorius*, 40

of the Emperor Honorius in 396 AD.⁴ Stilicho had wanted to take up the legacy of Theodosius and rule over both halves of the empire, at least as the effective administrator of the empire. The praetorian prefect of the East, Rufinus, however, stood in his way until he was assassinated in 395 AD. Rather than accepting Stilicho into the eastern court, Arcadius instead appointed the eunuch Eutropius, an enemy of Stilicho, as consul in the east. The rhetoric Claudian used under Stilicho's patronage sought to rally support around the western regent, to validate his claim to rule the Empire, and to attack his eastern rivals.

In Eutropium

Claudian's *In Eutropium* was written to criticize Eutropius and ultimately rebuke the East for appointing such a scoundrel into a high position of authority. Eutropius was a eunuch who had served as Arcadius' grand chamberlain, and before that he had served in the palace under Theodosius. Before even that, Claudian claims that he had been owned by one Ptolemy, who perhaps owned a brothel, and Ptolemy gave him away to a man named Arinthaëus because Eutropius was "no longer worth keeping nor old enough to be bought."⁵ Eutropius' past as an alleged panderer and servant tainted the entire eastern court under his direction and his sybaritic behavior incited the poet, Claudian, to produce feminizing stereotypes of the eastern Romans collectively.

Claudian asserts that "he who was not suffered to perform the duties of a slave is admitted to the administration of an empire; him whom a private house scorned as a

⁴ Cameron, *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the court of Honorius*, 42

⁵Claudian, *In Eutropium* I.63-64

servant, a palace tolerates as its lord.”⁶ Eutropius, a former house servant, failed to perform the tasks for which he was bought, according to Claudian, and yet he was later appointed consul, making the eastern court seem as though its standards for authority figures were even lower than the standards easterners upheld for household slaves.⁷ Not only was Eutropius incapable of doing his job, he was also unable to gain the approval of the other servants. The palace servants, who held a higher rank before his promotion, “murmured at such a colleague and long haughtily scorned his company.” Yet, the eastern court then allowed such a man, or half-man, who was repudiated by his fellow servants, to have power over an entire empire. Claudian emphasizes that they knew “of no people who [would] endure a eunuch’s rule” and that “the tribe of eunuchs was made for servitude.”⁸ The installation of a eunuch-ruler implicitly brings the people of the East down to a level of servitude. The East was breaking Roman tradition by allowing a eunuch to be a consul; moreover, eunuchs were meant to serve and not to rule.⁹ People ruled by eunuchs are liable to mimic their ruler and eventually to function as servants as well. The implicit argument here is that the east is in need of the strong leadership provided by Stilicho in the West.

⁶ “When his masters ceased to derive any advantage from that withered trunk (for his wasted limbs refused even to make the beds or cut wood for the kitchen fire, while his faithless nature forbade their entrusting him with the charge of gold or vesture or the secrets of the house—who could bring him to entrust his marriage-chamber to a panderer?” Here Claudian illustrated how Eutropius was too old and too fragile to carry out the job of a servant. Claudian, *In Eutropium*, I.142-144

⁷ Claudian describes Eutropius as a servant: “Scaring children, disgusting those that sat at meat, disgracing his fellow-slaves... When his masters ceased to derive any advantage from that withered trunk (for his wasted limbs refused even to make the beds or cut wood for the kitchen fire, while his faithless nature forbade their entrusting him with the charge of gold or vesture or the secrets of the house)... they thrust him from their houses like a troublesome corpse or an ill-omened ghost.” Claudian, *In Eutropium*, I.124-131

⁸ Claudian, *In Eutropium*, I.332

⁹ “But no country has ever had a eunuch for a consul or judge or general.” Claudian, *In Eutropium*, I.296-297

Further justifying his condemnation of what was happening in the East, Claudian describes easterners as effeminate. First, he explicitly attacks the gender of the easterners by calling them women, or rather by saying they were not men. “Our enemies [i.e., the foreign enemies of Rome] rejoiced at the sight and felt that at last we were lacking in *men*.”¹⁰ Eutropius’ sexuality is questioned fairly regularly, but in places Claudian extends the accusation to the East as a whole.¹¹ In book two, Mars asks Bellona, the sister of Mars and the Roman war goddess, “Shall we never succeed in curing the East of effeminacy? Will this corrupt age never learn true manliness?”¹² Here it is less clear whether or not disposing of Eutropius will cure the East of its effeminacy, but the response from Bellona encourages the idea that the East could be saved if Stilicho had control over it.¹³ It is clear, however, that Claudian thought the people of the East were being made effeminate by Eutropius, and distinctly suggests the influence of the consul over his people.

In order to preserve the Westerners’ dignity and avoid feminizing the court he is writing for, Claudian separates the eastern Romans from the western Romans by referring to the eastern court officials as “lords of Byzantium, of the Grecian citizens of Rome.”¹⁴ Simultaneously Claudian segregates the eastern Romans by calling them Greeks, and as a result he aligns being Greek with being quasi-feminine and, therefore, weak. He then casts a wider net over the eastern people when he implies that the people presiding in that half of the Empire is worthy of an emasculated senate.¹⁵ This statement shapes the idea that the Easterners are Greek, and since Greeks are feminine they are somewhat less

¹⁰ Here Claudian is referring to the eastern Roman soldiers. Claudian, *In Eutropium*, I.242-243

¹¹ . “Half-man” or “semivir,” *In Eutropium*, I.171. Later, “they have learned to obey an unmanned master” Claudian, *In Eutropium*, II. 156-157. Again, “that of changing my master’s sex” Claudian, *In Eutropium*, II.552

¹² Claudian, *In Eutropium*, II.112-114

¹³ Claudian, *In Eutropium* II.126-128

¹⁴ Claudian, *In Eutropium*, II.136

¹⁵ “O people worthy of such a senate, senate worthy of such a consul!” Claudian, *In Eutropium*, II.137

Roman, and maybe not even worthy of a Roman identity. The poet cleverly created a non-Roman identity for the East by culturally branding them with non-Roman characteristics.

In book two of *In Eutropium*, Claudian illustrates a future battle in which Mars and Bellona stir up the barbarian Gruthungi to attack the eastern empire, because she believes that “time was when the Grunthungi formed a Roman legion.”¹⁶ By stating this, Bellona explicitly says she thinks the Grunthungi should not only fight on behalf of Rome but also that they should become Roman by forming a Roman legion to attack the East. The next line insinuates that Bellona prefers the Gothic Gruthungi to the eastern Romans since the Goths were given laws by the Romans, which brought them out of their barbarian culture and transforming the Goths into a civilized people with Roman culture at the foundation (i.e. by laws). It is the cowardice of the East that “urges” the Gruthungi to fight, while Mars encourages the battle because he is disappointed with the East for becoming so effeminate.¹⁷ Eutropius at first tries to ignore the attack, until he realizes that he cannot put down Tarbigilus,¹⁸ the leader of the Gothic group, the Gruthungi, and calls an assembly of his “cronies, wanton youths and lecherous old men, whose sole concern is their stomachs, who find even silk robes too heavy; skillful dancers, and experts on charioteers.”¹⁹ The scene is somewhat humorous, albeit in a strongly satirical way, and reveals how Eutropius has corrupted the court, rendering the East useless in war.

¹⁶Claudian, *In Eutropium*, II.576

¹⁷Cameron reminds us, “it should be clear that Claudian’s aim is to show that Tribigild’s [Tarbigilus] revolt is the direct consequence of Eutropius’ consulate and the demoralizing effect it has been having on the eastern Empire as a whole.” Cameron, *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the court of Honorius*, 140.

¹⁸ Tarbigilus is Tribigild. Claudian uses the name Tarbigilus, but Cameron refers to him as Tribigild.

¹⁹ Cameron, *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the court of Honorius* 140

Among these men whom Eutropius calls to fight for him is Leo, a former weaver, who is sent to put down the leader of the Gothic Gruthungi, Tarbigilus. Claudian criticizes Leo's presence in the army in the first place, saying, "by whose advice didst thou exchange the comb for the sword?"²⁰ Weaving in antiquity was typically associated with women and was domestic work. His feminine character is confirmed during his final moments in life when he dies after mistaking a leaf blowing in the wind for an enemy about to attack. Leo's death, if anything, was a sign of cowardice and fragility and further ratifies Claudian's claim that feminine or effeminized authority will fail in a time of war. This scene was included in order to reiterate the East's tendency to place men with effeminate characteristics into positions of power, and to show the consequence of this. In this episode, it results in a pathetic and comedic death but most importantly in the eastern leader's defeat in battle.

Effeminacy caused other problems too, such as an inability to maintain self-control. In book one of *In Eutropium*, Eutropius is accused of being unchaste, and is described as some sort of sexual glutton who hungers and lusts after anyone he can get his hands on, for "no amount of vigilance could protect the marriage-bed from his attack; no bars could shut him out."²¹ This was a typical stereotype associated with eunuchs. The symptom of over-indulgence appears again at the very end of book two, but this time Claudian extends the illness to the palace as a whole rather than exclusively to Eutropius, by saying, "the palace devotes its attention to dances and feasting."²² Worst of all, however, the audience can see the toxicity of over-indulgence when it begins to hinder

²⁰ Claudian, *In Eutropium*, II. 456-457

²¹ Claudian, *In Eutropium*, I.80-81

²² Claudian, *In Eutropium*, II. 586-587

the capabilities of the Roman army. Tarbigilus' army sweeps through the eastern Roman camp, and the eastern Romans were so drunk that some were slain while still asleep.²³

Claudian's rhetoric generally applied detrimental stereotypes when it came to the East. Becoming effeminate was dangerous because masculinity was pivotal in Roman identity, and by accusing the East of being effeminate Claudian was inherently (albeit indirectly) attacking its claim to Roman identity. Masculinity, sometimes hyper-masculinity, was believed to be a key ingredient in the recipe that made for military success, and this was at a time when barbarian threats pushed against the borders of the empire. Michael Stewart has argued that authors of this period "linked military valour to their notions of the qualities that made up 'true' manliness," and I would argue that the converse is also true: without true manliness military valor could not be achieved.²⁴ Stilicho, whose military exploits were exaggerated in the works of Claudian, actively sought to enhance the idea of a feminine East and a masculine West in order to gain approval for his efforts to rule over the whole empire. The feminization of the eastern court was generated in order to justify an attack on it. Claudian reduced the eastern Romans to servants, or rather to being servant-like, by exploiting their choice to install Eutropius as consul and as a manager of the empire's affairs. He then made it more apparent by feminizing them, because women were subordinate to men in antiquity, in both social perception and law. Stilicho could save the East, because he maintains the true manliness the empire needed, and his "heroism itself serves as a sort of hyper-masculinity."²⁵

²³ Claudian, *In Eutropium*, II.432-439

²⁴ Stewart, *Some Disputes Surrounding Masculinity*, 87

²⁵ Stewart, *Some Disputes Surrounding Masculinity*, 81

Conclusion

Claudian's strategy in the *In Eutropium* was primarily to propagate for the support of Stilicho's consulship and legitimize his authority over the entire Roman Empire, even the East. Conveniently for Claudian, Arcadius appointed a eunuch as consul after Rufinus' death, which made effeminacy in the eastern court an easy target to attack. The effeminacy becomes exaggerated, however, and Claudian extends the weakness to any citizen under the rule of Eutropius, creating the illusion that the East needs Stilicho (a Western force) to redeem the East and make them Roman again, instituting this idea that the East is slowly losing its Romanness. Then he associates Greek ethnicity with weakness, over-indulgence, and effeminacy and creates a hostile stereotype for the East and anyone who identifies as ethnically Greek. Claudian dares to claim that the East de-Romanizes itself, and implies that they did so willingly by allowing Eutropius to become consul.

Sidonius Apollinaris: Panegyric on Anthemius

Context

Sidonius Apollinaris was born in Lyons on November 5, 432 AD,²⁶ to a noble family of the city: both his father and grandfather held the office of Prefect in Gaul. It is known that Sidonius received a secular education, but it is unknown where this occurred, presumably somewhere in Gaul.²⁷ In 452, he married the emperor Avitus' daughter, Papianilla, three years before Avitus became emperor of the West, in 455 AD. Sidonius also published a volume of poems in 452, for which he "hoped that the greater part of them might be buried in silence,"²⁸ but it was not until three years later that he composed his panegyric to Avitus, which is his first political extant work.²⁸

Political succession at Rome in the mid-fifth century was problematic. A year after Sidonius recited his panegyric to Avitus in Rome in 455 AD, Avitus was ousted by Ricimer²⁹ and Majorian³⁰ a year later in 456 AD. Peter Heather refers to Ricimer as the "heir of Stilicho: a well-connected barbarian proud to follow a Roman career, and who showed impeccable loyalty to the imperial ideal."³¹ After disposing of Avitus, the two had chosen to install Majorian as emperor in 457 AD. Ricimer grew disappointed with Majorian after an attempt to re-conquer North Africa failed and disposed of him four years later, replacing him with Libius Severus as the new western emperor. Severus was

²⁶ Stevens, *Sidonius Apollinaris*, 1

²⁷ "When we know so much about the curriculum of Sidonius' education it is rather a disappointment that we do not know at what place he received it." Stevens, *Sidonius Apollinaris*, 9

²⁸ Stevens, *Sidonius Apollinaris*, 19

²⁹ Roman general, grandson of Visigothic king Vallia. Became political authority as kingmaker after execution of Majorian. Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, 473

³⁰ Western Roman emperor 458-61. Commander of the Roman army in Italy after death of Aetius, and after destroying Avitus' regime became Emperor in the West. When his expedition to North Africa failed, Ricimer executed him. Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, 471

³¹ Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, 390

an old senator, who was not well received by the western Romans, while the emperor in Constantinople, Leo (457-74), refused to recognize him at all. Soon Severus died of natural causes, leaving Ricimer to find a new and acceptable emperor who would lead the West while simultaneously being easy to control by Ricimer.³²

With the endorsement of the eastern Emperor Leo, Anthemius,³³ an eastern Roman general, was sent to fulfill the role of western emperor. Anthemius had an exemplary pedigree: his ancestry on both his maternal and paternal sides had included members of the Roman army and had held many offices, and he himself was already married to Euphemia, the daughter of the eastern emperor Marcian (450-457). Anthemius was elevated to the western throne, and an alliance with Ricimer was formed through a marriage between Ricimer and Alypia, Anthemius' daughter. Installing a capable emperor was the easy part, however. Now Anthemius had to focus on restoring political stability in the West. By granting Leo the power to send an emperor of whom it approved, the West had gained access to the armies in the East. But Anthemius also had to gain the acceptance of the barbarian groups already residing in the western empire, which had to be done by maintaining treaties or making new agreements.³⁴ Anthemius also needed to win the support of the Roman people and aristocracy especially by promising to rejuvenate the slowly unraveling West. When Sidonius delivered an auspicious panegyric

³² Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, 392. Sidonius gives insight as to why Ricimer may not have just taken the throne for himself. He cannot deny that Ricimer has been responsible for defending the empire, but admits that Geiseric refuses to make any treaty with him. Sidonius says Geiseric's hatred stems from jealousy of Ricimer, since Ricimer has royal barbarian relations. *Panegyric on Anthemius*, 357-365

³³ Anthemius was educated in Constantinople, and came from a distinguished family from the East. Heather claims that he would have been raised to the Purple much earlier had his own inhibitions about obtaining power not stopped him. Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, 393

³⁴ Heather admits the Western half of the empire was surrounded by potential threat of foreign invasion. In the south were the Visigoths and Burgundians. The far west had the Britons, and the "Frankish warbands were flexing their muscles on Roman soil." The Western Romans had to find a way to coexist with the barbarian groups, which was typically done by financial agreements. Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, 394

to Anthemius in 468 AD, it strengthened the emperor's support among the Gallo-Roman populace. Unfortunately, mere support by the people within the empire would not restore the West; instead, Anthemius' prime directive was to succeed where Majorian had failed: to take North Africa back from the Vandals and Alans.

The Panegyric for Anthemius

On January first, 468 AD, Sidonius recited a panegyric to the emperor Anthemius while leading a deputation in Italy.³⁵ Delivering a panegyric while on the deputation required that Sidonius be strategic in choosing his words because among the crowd of western Roman aristocrats were Ricimer, Pope Hilary and Anthemius himself.³⁶ Undoubtedly, Anthemius faced disapproval from the western Romans, especially since Pope Hilary had “publically registered his disapproval of the emperor early in his reign” because Anthemius took company with pagan philosophers despite being a Christian, and had even brought Count Marcellinus, a pagan, with him to Rome.³⁷ It was Sidonius' duty not to offend his distinguished western audience while simultaneously praising Anthemius, who was born and educated in Constantinople. Lynette Watson argues that while the westerners probably preferred the former senator Anthemius as a ruler to Ricimer, they most likely held resentment because his selection “highlighted their own inability to handle the affairs of the western empire.”³⁸ So, Sidonius recites a panegyric that superficially seems to praise the emperor who comes from the East, but underneath the surface reinstates western Roman dominance and control through allusions to the

³⁵ Sidonius, Letters 1.9.5

³⁶ Watson, *Representing the Past, Redefining the Future*, 185

³⁷ Watson, *Representing the Past, Redefining the Future*, 185-6

³⁸ Watson, *Representing the Past, Redefining the Future*, 186

Thracians (with whom he associates Anthemius) and divine interaction between Roma and Aurora, the latter standing in for the East.

Anthemius' best quality from a western standpoint was his military strength. Under emperor Leo in the east, Anthemius had led a successful attack on the Ostrogoths and the Huns.³⁹ Sidonius exploits the emperor's military valour and within the first fifty lines of the panegyric refers to Constantinople, where Anthemius is from, as situated in the land of the Thracians. This directly relates the eastern Romans, who were the contemporary inhabitants of that land, to the ancient Thracians, a barbarian tribe no longer existing (whom had been subsumed into the general eastern Roman population).⁴⁰ First mentioned by Herodotus, the Thracians were known for being ruthless barbarian warriors. Thucydides says, "for the Thracian race, like the worst barbarians, is most bloodthirsty whenever it has nothing to fear."⁴¹ According to Sidonius, among them, "children are born into a world of ice, and their native snow hardens the soft limbs of infants even from the mother's womb."⁴² Before mentioning anything about the martial behavior of the Thracians, Sidonius emphasizes the frigid climate of Thrace. Immediately the audience is reminded that Thrace is cold and covered in snow, which shapes and affects anyone who is from this region even before birth. Such a cold environment implies a lack of civilization and isolation in classical literature. Hippocrates is the first to outline bodily symptoms of a cold climate in *Airs, Waters, and Places* where he says that

³⁹ The Ostrogoths were led by Valamer in Illyricum, and was possibly between 459-468 AD. Anthemius had also "laid siege to Serdica, under difficult circumstances, after a force of Huns which had crossed the frozen Danube and ravaged Dacia under Hormisdac seized the city." Once the battle was won, Anthemius was able to dictate terms with the Huns. *PLRE*, 395

⁴⁰ Thrace as a geographic region still existed, but the people who were the Thracians, the tribe, was not. I would argue, Sidonius refers to a former people rather than saying Anthemius is from Thrace is to not only draw connections to a warlike people, but also reveals a slight stereotype of eastern Romans being barbaric.

⁴¹ Thucydides, *Thucydides*, 7.29.4

⁴² *Panegyric to Anthemius*, 36-37

the cold hardens the body, and “waters from snow and ice are all bad.”⁴³ Hippocrates affirms that the land and waters from which a man is reared “are the most important factors that create differences in men’s constitutions,” which is the same implication Sidonius makes about Anthemius.⁴⁴ When Ovid was in exile in Thrace he makes connections between the relationship between cold climate and culture. He complained about the cold and uncivilized nature of Tomis,⁴⁵ and saying that he was at the very end of civilization.⁴⁶ Interestingly, Sidonius claims that children in Thrace are still being brought up this way, implying that the eastern Romans, from their gestation, verge on being uncivilized and their environment shapes them to uphold the lifestyle of the former barbarians who lived there hundred of years before.

The hardship endured from the weather helps the Thracians in their militarized childhood, during which they train with swords, and prepare for battle at a young age.⁴⁷ Although Sidonius suggests the Thracians are uncivilized through his allusions to the cold climate, he claims the Thracians follow the “laws of the sword,” and by using that phrase, I believe, Sidonius tries to persuade his audience that there was some order among the Thracians, just a more militant one. Connecting the eastern Romans to the

⁴³ Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places*, VIII

⁴⁴ Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places*, XX

⁴⁵ Tomis, modern day Constanta, Romania.

⁴⁶ “If you granted me a milder, closer place of exile a large part of my punishment would be eased. Thrust among enemies, patiently I suffer the extremes, no exiles more distant from his native land. I’m the only one sent to seven-mouthed Hister’s delta, I’m crushed beneath virgin Callisto’s icy pole –the Ciziges, the Colchi, the hordes of Teretei and Getae, are barely held back by the deep flood of the Danube –and while others have been banished with greater cause, no one’s assigned a remoter place than mine. There’s nothing further than this, except frost and foes, and the sea closed by the binding cold. So far north Rome extends, west of the Euxine Sea: the Basternae and the Sarmatians hold the nearby region. This is the furthest land subject to Italian law, barely clinging to the edges of your Empire.” Ovid, *Tristia: His Plea, his Prayer*, II.185-200

⁴⁷ “They have grown but a short time, and anon they play at battle with javelins; this sport is prompted by the wounds that suckled them [the horse wounds that the children drank from], The boys, gifted hunters, clear the dens of their beasts; the young men, enriched with plunder, honour the laws of the swords; and when their old age has reached its fullness not to end it with steel is a disgrace. Thus do these countrymen of Mars order their lives.” *Panegyric on Anthemius*, 41-46

Thracians at this point accentuated their military power and the potential for success they brought to the west with the appointment of Anthemius. Sidonius is careful, however, and does not directly refer to the Thracians as barbarians in his speech. Instead he rhetorically places the eastern Romans into a subordinate category by implying they are innately less civilized than the western Romans. But they are uncivilized in a way that is at the moment eminently useful, for who else could best defeat the savage Vandals in North Africa?

By the same geographic logic, Anthemius' barbaric upbringing is softened because he "surrounded by the sea, imbile[s] a tempered blend of Europe's and Asia's air," and is "softened by the breath of Eurus' trumpet."⁴⁸ Sidonius also recounts the emperor's education to explain to the audience that Anthemius was not raised entirely without civilization. In Constantinople, the emperor was trained in the Greek teachings of sages, Plato, Pythagoras, and more, but Sidonius claims it was via the Latin works from which Anthemius was "wont to range through all antiquity and strove to inscribe."⁴⁹ Through his studies in Latin, Sidonius asserts, "he was moulded," giving more credit of Anthemius' intellect to Latin literature, in order to align Anthemius with the western Romans.⁵⁰ Even in education and in intellect, Latin dominates over the Greek, which reflects how Sidonius thinks about the western native Latin-speaking Romans being superior over the eastern native Greek-speaking Romans.

⁴⁸ *Panegyric on Anthemius*, 47-49

⁴⁹ For education with Greek and Latin: *Paengyric on Anthemius*, 156-192

⁵⁰ *Panegyric on Anthemius*. 193-197

This subordination of the east to the west is confirmed in an exchange later in the poem between Roma and Aurora.⁵¹ Roma comes to Aurora during the night, and explains to her that she has not come to ask for “all that lies between the Euphrates and Tigris,” this being land that Aurora currently holds, even though Aurora only holds that land because of Roma’s conquest of those lands (i.e., the eastern empire holds these lands because of prior western conquests).⁵² Roma, however, expresses willingness to “lay old grievances to rest” if Aurora would only give her Anthemius as emperor. Through this interaction between personified divine representatives of east and west, Sidonius makes it seem as though the East owes all the land it currently has to Roma, or rather western Romans, which makes it indebted to the westerners. The author implies that Roma demanded to have Anthemius, not that he was given. This way the west can maintain a sense of dominance, and rather than owe the east for an emperor who would potentially grant them a military victory, it is receiving what had been owed to it. Watson suggests that Roma is completely in control because it is she who “travels to the land of Aurora, the Dawn, not to beg for help from the East, but to point out that she is owed.”⁵³ Aurora’s prime role in the panegyric is to give only what Roma asks, making her role a passive one and revealing that she is at the command of Roma.

Throughout the panegyric Sidonius never refers to the emperor as being Greek. This stands in contrast to a personal correspondence with his friend Vincentius, in which Sidonius tells the case of Arvandus. Arvandus was convicted of treason and stripped of his titles after urging the Gothic king Euric to break an alliance with the Romans and

⁵¹ Aurora is the goddess of dawn, and in this panegyric is being used to embody the East while Roma embodies the West.

⁵² For all the lands Roma conquers and let the East have: *Panegyric on Anthemius*, 440-477

⁵³ Watson, *Representing the Past, Redefining the Future*, 187

attack Brittany.⁵⁴ Arvandus is said to have referred to Anthemius as the “Greek” emperor, and does not even call him by name. This is interesting because in this one text Anthemius is only Greek whereas in the other ethnicity is not placed on him at all. I would argue that Sidonius’ aversion to describing Anthemius as Greek was to avoid outwardly harming the emperor’s reputation as a Roman at a very formal event at the court. Anthemius was obviously Greek in western perceptions, but since Sidonius was attempting to ease the minds of the western Roman audience he intentionally keeps out the word that might question his argument. The avoidance of this term could show a growing bias towards Greek ethnicity in western Roman culture. Sidonius wants to emphasize Anthemius’ similarity to the western Romans, because being Greek separates Anthemius from his Latin-speaking constituents, and could imply that by being Greek Anthemius is somehow subordinate.

Conclusion

In stark contrast to Claudian, who portrays the eastern Romans as effeminate, Sidonius associates contemporary eastern Romans with the Thracians due to their shared geographic locale, resulting in an image of hyper-masculine warriors for the eastern Romans. This is most likely a rhetorical tool used to comfort the western Romans in the audience who hope that this eastern aid will militarily restore the west. Like Claudian, however, Sidonius also places the eastern Romans in a subordinate role where the west continues to dominate and control. The prejudice against Greek ethnicity sneaks its way into the panegyric through the description of Anthemius’ education, and lack of the word Greek as an adjective to describe Anthemius, maintains the notion that westerners viewed

⁵⁴ Sidonius, *Letter to his friend Vincentius* I.vii

Greek ethnicity as a negative trait. By claiming that the Latin works Anthemius read in his education played a larger role in the emperor's intellectual development than the Greek works, Sidonius again highlights Latin—western—dominance. While Sidonius does not portray the eastern Romans as bad or weak overall, he explicitly wants to assert that the east remains subordinate to the west, and the west was, and remains, more Roman than the east.

Cassiodorus: The *Variae*

Context

In the second half of the fifth century, a series of short-lived emperors ruled the Western Roman Empire. After Anthemius, Olybrius ruled for about six months, and was succeeded by Glycerius, who ruled for a year. The eastern Roman Emperor, Leo I, sent Julius Nepos to dispose of Glycerius. Nepos, like his predecessor, ruled for a little over a year and was then replaced by Romulus Augustus, who had been proclaimed emperor by his father, the army general Orestes, in 475. Romulus, however, was not immune to usurpation himself and in 476 the Germanic troops revolted against Orestes, resulting in his death and the deposition of Romulus at the hands of Odoacer. Odoacer, who was of Germanic descent, then became the first barbarian king to rule Roman Italy without a puppet emperor.

At this time the “western senate had little power and few functions as a body. It was still valued chiefly as enshrining the glorious traditions of Rome.”⁵⁵ This suggested that the existence of the western senate was more that of a traditional symbol, and not exactly crucial for sustaining the empire. This caused a power shift in favor of the east since the western empire became more reliant on the eastern emperor and court, generating a need for eastern approval, which Odoacer fruitlessly strove to obtain. He never achieved recognition from eastern emperor Zeno throughout his reign, and in 489

⁵⁵ Barnish, *Cassiodorus: Variae*, x

Zeno sent a group of Ostrogothic soldiers led by Theodoric the Amal⁵⁶ to replace the barbarian usurper.

The western Romans, at least eventually, seemed to perceive Theodoric as a savior who would revive traditional Roman culture within the empire.⁵⁷ He was a member of the prestigious Ostrogothic family, the Amals, served as consul in the east in 484 and was even given the title of Patrician while serving Emperor Zeno. Theodoric received an education in Constantinople and, despite being an Arian Christian, “remained on good terms with the catholic church of Italy.”⁵⁸ Once Theodoric seized Italy from Odoacer, a line of Ostrogothic kings ruled the western Roman Empire. After Theodoric’s death, his grandson Athalaric inherited the throne, and then was followed by his mother Amalasuintha, his cousin Theodahad, and finally Witigis, a general who was elected by the Goths and caused Theodahad’s death.

Cassiodorus and the *Variae*

Cassiodorus acted as ghostwriter for the kings and queens of the Goths in Italy.

Cassiodorus was a western Roman, who was from a southern Italian family.⁵⁹ The collection of his official correspondence, the *Variae*, consists of twelve books and 468 letters, and was compiled in 537/8 under Gothic King Wittigis, while the eastern general Belisarios was invading Italy; it was possibly compiled in Constantinople [see

⁵⁶ Barnish, *Cassiodorus: Variae*, xi

⁵⁷ For more extensive work on Theodoric than I will provide here see: Arnold, *Theodoric and the Roman Restoration*, 2014. Moorhead, *Theodoric in Italy*, 1992.

⁵⁸ Barnish, *Cassiodorus: Variae*, xi

⁵⁹ For more on Cassiodorus and his family refer to Part C: The house of the Cassiodori and Part D: Cassiodorus and his kindred in the *Variae* in Barnish. Barnish, *Cassiodorus: Variae*, xxxvii

Bjornlie].⁶⁰ Cassiodorus held a number of offices, but wrote much of this official correspondence as “*quaestor*, chief legal expert and official publicist.”⁶¹ These letters serve not only as reflections of the Gothic royalty who rule Italy, as they were written on their behalf, but also reflect on Cassiodorus himself. He flaunted an array of rhetorical techniques in the *Variae*, and sought to make the Goths in charge appear to have traditional Roman eloquence when speaking to the Romans or to foreign powers. Barnish suggests that Cassiodorus’ “favourable picture of senators, tribesmen and Gothic monarchs should not be taken on trust.”⁶² Here, I have chosen to ascribe the contents of the letters to reflect mainly the opinions of the Goths, in whose name they were written, but also opinions of the western Romans, since Cassiodorus was the author of the letters.⁶³

The *Variae*: Looking Deeper

Cassiodorus began his job as ‘ghost-writer’ under King Theodoric with the first letter of the *Variae* dating to 508. According to Peter Heather, “Ostrogothic Italy was the most conspicuously Roman of the successor states to the western Roman Empire,” and Theodoric governed in a way to create a “vision of Romanitas” in the western Empire.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Barnish. *Cassiodorus: Variae*, xiv. For more on the compilation of the *Variae* see: Bjornlie, Shane. *Politics and Tradition Between Rome, Ravenna and Constantinople*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

⁶¹ For more on Cassiodorus and his life and offices see: O’Donnell, James. *Cassiodorus, Statesman and Historian*: Yale University, May 1975. Barnish, *Cassiodorus: Variae*, xi

⁶² Barnish, *Cassiodorus: Variae*, xvi

⁶³ For further explanation of why Cassiodorus’ opinions also reflect opinions of the Gothic please see the Procopius section. I would argue that in this period, Gothic and Roman powers and peoples are so closely entwined that they share common beliefs about the eastern Romans and their role in the western empire. Also, it is clear through Procopius’ *Wars*, and secondary analysis done by Arnold, that the western Romans allowed Theodoric authority over him, therefore merging the two cultures and/or ethnicities together, which validates my opinion that each group can be classified as one when looking at perceptions of the eastern Romans.

⁶⁴ For more on Theodoric and his reign see: Moorhead 1992, and Arnold 2014. Heather, *Goths*, 221, 223

Theoderic modeled his Empire on Roman tradition and wanted to uphold Roman laws and customs. The new king, according to Procopius, governed both the Goths and the western Roman “with all the qualities that are appropriate to one who is an emperor by nature,” even though he never claimed “the right to assume either the garb or the name of an emperor of the Romans.”⁶⁵

Previous authors we have seen, such as Claudian and Sidonius, refer to the Greekness of the eastern Romans. Even Theoderic in a letter to Abundatius, an Italian Praetorian Prefect, calls Anastasius ‘the Greek.’ In a letter to Boethius, a translator of Greek works into Latin, Theoderic mentions the ancient Greeks.⁶⁶ Specifically, Theoderic alludes to the education available in Athens, where Boethius “mingled in [his] toga among their cloaked assemblies, [so] that you turned Greek theories into Roman teaching.”⁶⁷ The Athenians are called the “sons of Cecrops” and Theoderic lists off names of famous learned Greeks such as Pythagoras, Ptolemy, Nicomachus, Euclid, Plato, etc.⁶⁸ Theoderic praises Boethius for taking these works of the ancient Greeks and Italicizing them, and for this Boethius deserves honor. These famous Greek authors, and later Greek myths, are alluded to throughout the letter, though it is unclear what relation they bear to the contemporary “Greeks, i.e., the eastern Romans. The letter not only demonstrates Theoderic’s own knowledge of ancient Greek culture, but also his admiration of it. It appears that ancient Greek teachings serve as a cornerstone for civilized culture as the Goths conceive it.

⁶⁵ Procopius, *Wars*. V.1.26

⁶⁶ Boethius was brought up from a prominent Roman family, and was the son-in-law of Symmachus, who is also mentioned in the *Variae*. According to the PLRE Boethius was “devoted to learning and studied Philosophy from an early age.” *PLRE II*, 275

⁶⁷ Cassiodorus, *Variae*, I.45.3

⁶⁸ For the entire list see: Cassiodorus, *Variae*, I.45.3

But there was also tension between the Goths and the eastern Romans. In 508 eastern Emperor Anastasius sent “8,000 east Roman troops in 100 warships and 100 troopships” to the coast of Italy to support the Frankish King Clovis in an operation against the Goths.⁶⁹ Clovis was “intent on expanding his kingdom at the expense of the Visigoths,”⁷⁰ but Theoderic was tightly allied with the Visigothic kingdom (as well as, at times, the Frankish kingdom, as he married the daughter of Clovis in 493). The alliance between the east and the Franks heavily upset Theoderic, and he saw it as a threat to the unity of the Roman Empire. Theoderic asks emperor Anastasius, “How can you separate from your august alliance one whose character you [Anastasius] thus try to make conformable to your own?” Here, Theoderic questions the motivation of Anastasius to scheme with Clovis when Theoderic is king of the only real legitimate Roman state in the west, and he, Theoderic, recommends that the eastern emperor should be more focused on collaborating with Theoderic than with Clovis, who is an outsider. He goes on: “For we think you [Anastasius] will not suffer that any discord should remain between two Republics, which are declared to have ever formed one body under their ancient princes, and which ought not to be joined by a mere sentiment of love, but actively to aid one another with all their powers.”⁷¹ Theoderic reminds the eastern Emperor that, as two halves of a whole, they should work together and not try to stir up trouble that will disrupt the harmony among the Romans. Here too, Theoderic is emphasizing that he governs the western Roman Empire and, if Anastasius goes against him, then the eastern Emperor goes against one part of the Roman people.

⁶⁹ Clovis was king of the Franks 509-511. Heather, *Goths*, 229

⁷⁰ Heather, *Goths*, 229

⁷¹ Cassiodorus, *Variae*. 1.1

The Gothic king is recognizing the eastern Emperor as Roman, and also as his guide. Theoderic adds, “our royalty is an imitation of yours, modeled on your good purpose a copy of the only empire; and [only] insofar as we follow you do we excel all other nations.” Theoderic put Anastasius’ allegiance to the Roman Empire on the spot. By claiming to be part of the Roman whole and even a replica of the eastern Empire, Theoderic criticized Anastasius’ attempt to attack “the Roman people.” Anastasius has an obligation as the leader of the eastern Empire to maintain peace and stability between the two *res publicae*, and Theoderic is even willing to give Anastasius credit for building an Empire that would succeed the other barbarian groups. This is not complete submission, but it is a subservient gesture to allow Anastasius’ half of the Empire to be the original, and Theoderic’s the copy.

Two years later, in 511, Theoderic wrote again to the ‘most pious’ eastern emperor Anastasius⁷² concerning Theoderic’s appointment of the consul Felix, stating: “Now I, who am won over by good morals, and pleased by proven honesty, bestow the consular insignia on this candidate.”⁷³ It had become tradition for eastern emperors to approve western candidates for such high offices before the actual office was bestowed, so the next statement in the letter is not surprising. Theoderic demands: “so do you, who can be delighted in impartial goodwill by the prosperity of either commonwealth, add your support and your vote. He who is worth the elevation of such an office deserves to be chosen by the judgment of us both.”⁷⁴ This letter shows that Anastasius’ approval of Felix is clearly desired, but does not necessarily imply that it is needed. In fact, a note by

⁷² Eastern Roman emperor reigning 491-518

⁷³ Cassiodorus, *Variae*, II.1.4

⁷⁴ Cassiodorus, *Variae*, II.1.4

the translator, Barnish, states that the appointment is entirely the work of Theoderic, and Anastasius' assent is optional.⁷⁵ There is a possibility that Theoderic is simply involving Anastasius pro forma in order to uphold tradition, and not because he feels subordinate to the eastern emperor. I would argue, however, that the appointment of Felix forced Anastasius to stifle his previous hostility. During Theoderic's reign many Goths were put into high positions, and the Gallo-Romans saw this appointment as the restorations of "Roman gravity, not alien custom."⁷⁶ Arnold suggests this moment was "'bittersweet in Constantinople, since these very developments had been the consequence of the emperor's [Anastasius'] own hostilities and intrigues in the lead-up to 508."⁷⁷ By uniting the Gallo-Romans under the Gothic king, Theoderic trapped Anastasius. If Anastasius acted against Theoderic again, it would look like an attack on the western Romans, and Theoderic had already "solicited the emperor's acknowledgment" in order to "place and eastern seal of approval on another fait accompli," which only further bound emperor Anastasius to consent to the actions and wishes of Theoderic.

This new independence most likely intensified when Pope Symmachus' expressed favoritism towards the Gothic King. At this time Anastasius was trying to stifle the revolt of the eastern Roman general Vitalian, who was able to gain support within the armies through religious means. Anastasius was a *miaphysite*,⁷⁸ which made him unpopular among the eastern Christians of the capital. Anastasius tried to ease the tension by

⁷⁵ For this he also cites Witigis in Procopius' Wars: "One might add that the Goths have conceded that the dignity of the consulship should be conferred upon Romans every year by the emperor of the east." Procopius, *Wars*. VI.vi.20

⁷⁶ Arnold, *Theoderic*, 292

⁷⁷ Consequences of the fleet sent to aid Clovis, presumably, Arnold, *Theoderic*, 290

⁷⁸ In Christianity, *miaphysitism* refers to the unified nature of Christ's divine and human nature. The Greek Orthodox Church is *duophysite*, which means they believe that Christ had two natures, one divine and the other human.

“courting the Pope,” but the Pope had “deferred to Theoderic in such matters.”⁷⁹ Heather suggests, “the Emperor [Anastasius] had to alter his stance” from hostility towards compatibility with the Gothic King in order to win the Pope’s favor.⁸⁰ Theoderic gained an advantage in the Roman world and was able to leverage his position through religious authority.

The Gothic king also viewed the eastern emperor as a potential threat. In a letter to his own Praetorian Prefect Abundatius, Theoderic informs the prefect that he is “raising a navy which will both ensure the arrival of the cargoes of public corn and may, if need be, combat the ships of the enemy.”⁸¹ Then in a follow-up letter to the same Abundatius, he refers to Anastasius as “the Greek” saying: “Now that we have our fleet, there is no need for the Greek to fasten a quarrel upon us... With envy they see that we have now stolen from them the secret of their strength.”⁸² Theoderic would not be making these statements unless he suspected the possibility of another attack to come from the east. Clearly, the east is perceived as a potential threat to Theoderic’s Roman Italy, and the earlier friction that existed between Anastasius had not completely ceased.

Theoderic’s grandson, Athalaric took the throne at the age of ten years in 526 with his mother, Amalasuintha, acting as regent. He, too, feared an eastern invasion. In an edict issued in 533 that was sent out to stop the abuse of offices, he says, “if we subdue our crimes [the abuse of offices], the armies of our enemies will fall more easily,”⁸³ and

⁷⁹ Heather, *Goths*, 252

⁸⁰ Heather, *Goths*, 252

⁸¹ Cassiodorus: *Variae*, V.16

⁸² Here I assume the strength is a naval force. Cassiodorus: *Variae*, V.17

⁸³ Cassiodorus, *Variae*, IX.18

Barnish suggests this enemy could be a reference to the easterners.⁸⁴ Otherwise, Athalaric seemed to be more dependent on eastern authority than his predecessor. In the letter he mentioned his father Eutharic's⁸⁵ adoption by arms by the eastern Emperor Justin, which, Barnish states, "implied the inferior status of the adoptee [Eutharic]."⁸⁶ By alluding to this, Athalaric reminded emperor Justin that he, Justin, is superior to the Goths. Then Athalaric attempted to gain Justin's support by claiming that they were "close kindred, since [Justin] gave [Athalaric] a grandson's favour when [Justin] bestowed on [Eutharic] the joy of adoption."⁸⁷ Through this familial relationship, emperor Justin is the head of the family, if we follow the son/grandson allusion that Athalaric is making, and as a result Athalaric is conceding the eastern emperor's superiority. Athalaric further defines this relationship when he says, "let my boyhood procure the guardianship of your favour."⁸⁸ Again, Athalaric is stating that he is a young boy, and Justin, an old man by this point, is his guardian. This is much like the statement Theoderic made in his letter to Anastasius where he claims the western Empire is modeled on the eastern one. The language contains praise of emperor Justin, and with the request to have this father-son-like relationship; Athalaric viewed the eastern emperor as a superior authority.

Athalaric's reign was short-lived. His death in 534 compelled his mother Amalasuintha to appoint her cousin, Theodahad, as her coregent. Theodahad was, like her, a member of the Amal family, which made him the only legitimate male of the Amals at the time, so when Amalasuintha appointed him she made him "swear to follow her

⁸⁴ Barnish also suggests this could be referring to the Gepids, or the Franks as well. It is uncertain as to whether or not this is definitively about the east.

⁸⁵ Eutharic was a Visigoth who married Theoderic's daughter, Amalasuentha. It is presumed that Eutharic would rule the west once Theoderic died, however Eutharic died when Theoderic was 70 years old.

⁸⁶ Barnish, Cassiodorus: *Variae*, 101

⁸⁷ Cassiodorus, *Variae*, VIII.1.4

⁸⁸ Cassiodorus, *Variae*, VIII.1.4

command,” in order to retain control.⁸⁹ This posed a set of new complications in the Gothic realm. The Gothic royalty criticized her legitimacy from the start in regard to the education of her son.⁹⁰ She even killed off two important members of the Gothic elite in an attempt to stifle these criticisms, and also sought patronage from the eastern Emperor Justinian.⁹¹ When Theodahad had her murdered, the ‘diplomatic offensive,’ or rather political tension, between east and west was revived and “given added momentum by the claim that Amalasuintha had been Justinian’s protégée.”⁹²

Both king Theodahad and his queen Gudeliva wrote letters filled with flattery to the eastern Emperor Justinian and Empress Theodora, likely to mend the wound created by Amalasuintha’s death.⁹³ Theodahad admitted that he wished Theodora would “command no less in [Theodahad’s] realm than in [Theodora’s] empire,” and even praised her for her morality.⁹⁴ Barnish points out that here Theodahad praises a known former prostitute for her morality, which possibly emphasized the effort to which Theodahad wanted to impress the empress. The queen Gudeliva presented similar exuberance and she “urgently” desired to win the empress’ favor because it would “commend [Gudeliva] in every realm. For [Theodora] should make [Gudeliva] bright, since [Gudeliva] wish[es] to shine from [Theodora’s] luster.”⁹⁵ Here, the Empress of the east holds the authority. Both Gudeliva and Theodahad desperately seek the acceptance

⁸⁹ Procopius, *Wars* 5.4.4ff; Cassiodorus, *Variae* 10.1-4. Heath, *Goths*, 262

⁹⁰ Procopius, *Wars* .V.I.12-15. Heather, *Goths*, 261

⁹¹ Insert text where she delivered shipment of treasure to Justinian.

⁹² Heather, *Goths*, 263

⁹³ In Procopius’ *Secret History*, Procopius wrote that it was actually Theodora who instigated the murder of Amalasuntha by sending Petros because Theodora was jealous of her beauty. In which case, I would argue that either Justinian saw this murder as an excuse to make war and therefore force Theodahad to bow to him, or Theodahad and his queen were saw the power of Theodora and did not want to be killed themselves, therefore gave her excessive praise. Procopius, *Secret History*. Chapter XVI

⁹⁴ Cassiodorus: *Variae*, X.20

⁹⁵ Cassiodorus: *Variae*, X.21

of Theodora and speak highly of her reputation. In fact, Theodahad even claimed that he wants her recommendation to be associated with his fame.

Theodahad requested peace from Justinian in a letter containing hyper-flattering language. He tempted Justinian, an emperor known for upholding and restoring Roman tradition, by saying: “Remember how much your predecessors took care to concede from their legal rights, that they might procure alliances with my forebears.”⁹⁶ Theodahad knew Justinian’s goal is to restore the glory of the Roman Empire, and wants to offer an alliance. The Gothic king simultaneously offers Justinian authority over him (by simply handing over peace rather than making Justinian ask for it) and secured his own authority by making an alliance that would keep him on the western throne. If Justinian refused the peace, it could be seen as breaking tradition, which goes against Roman cultural values. Theodahad strategically tried to lure Justinian into a trap where he wanted Justinian to feel superior but wants to ensure Justinian would not have full control over the west.

For reasons we need not get into here, tension increased again between east and west when Justinian ordered his general Belisarius to take back parts of the western Empire. The Senate of Rome and Wittigis pleaded with Justinian to restore peace. In a letter from the Roman Senate, Cassiodorus asks Justinian to “bestow on our king [Wittigis] your most enduring peace.”⁹⁷ The Senate states that in order to respect “the Roman name” Justinian should have mercy on them. Just as when Theoderic had attacked Anastasius’ alliance with Clovis (not a Roman), the Senate also reminds Justinian that he is attacking Romans. The Roman Senate recognizes Justinian as someone who upholds

⁹⁶ Cassiodorus: *Variae*, X.26

⁹⁷ Cassiodorus: *Variae*, XI.13.1

Romanness, and they use it as a ploy to stop him from attacking Italy. Belisarius took Naples in 536, while Theodahad remained in Rome; this enraged the Goths who then murdered him and elected Wittigis, a “highly capable military commander,” as their new king.⁹⁸

In 538, King Wittigis begged for a similar peace and portrayed Justinian as a savior who could “heal all that has been done,” especially since Wittigis is earnestly seeking Justinian’s favor in order to stop potential war, at a time when Belisarius was dispatched to Sicily, and another eastern army was sent to the Gothic holding in Dalmatia.⁹⁹ Wittigis also refers to Justinian as “most merciful emperor” and Wittigis feels deserving of the emperor’s love. Wittigis’ letter seems much more subservient than the others, and he mentions the admiration that he had felt for the emperor when he held a private station. I believe he alluded to his former inferior rank to signal to Justinian that he, Wittigis, was still inferior to him, and willing to let him take up a superior authority, a similar relationship that was intimated earlier, between Theoderic and Anastasius. Wittigis wants peace between east and west but also wants to keep his authority in the west, like Theoderic.

Conclusion

Letters written on behalf of Theodoric reveal a western Roman State that clearly wants to prove itself as valid and equal to the east. According to Arnold, the western Romans welcomed Theodoric as a savior, and expected him to restore Rome to her proper glory. For his part, Theodoric wanted to be respected by Anastasius, and also admitted that he

⁹⁸ Procopius, *Wars* 5.8.1-11, Heather, *Goths*, 263

⁹⁹ Heather, *Goths*, 263

modeled his rule after the eastern Emperor, if even only for flattery. Under Theodoric, the eastern half of the empire is depicted as a Roman twin-state to the west, but also as a potential enemy to be watched. Theodoric does not seem to completely feel the need to gain the approval of Anastasius, and simultaneously prepares counter-measures in case of another attack on Italy.

Theodoric's Gothic successors seem to have depended on eastern assent and sought reunion among the two halves. Letters written on behalf of Gothic royalty, including Athalaric, Theodahad, Gudeliva, and Wittigis, voice a slightly different perspective than the one provided by Theodoric. Tensions rose upon Theodoric's death, and the Gothic Kings and Queens wanted to stabilize their relationship within the Empire. Athalaric shared the worry of a 'Greek' enemy with his predecessor, but also begged the emperor Justin to get along with him. Theodahad, Gudeliva, and Wittigis shower the empress Theodora and emperor Justinian with unbounded praise. These Goths demand to be recognized and use their claim to Roman-ness to coerce the eastern Emperors into compliance, which makes the east look as though it is gaining authority and control.

A letter issued by the Senate of the City of Rome to the Emperor Justinian in 535 begs Justinian to save them from his own attacks, and claims that if he does not save them then they will become enemies. This letter summarizes the conflict between the western and eastern Empires since the first letter in the *Variae*. Again, the western Romans are emphasizing that if Justinian, an eastern Emperor, refuses to cooperate with the western Empire, then his Romanness will be questioned and the west will become an enemy. They want to prevent war, but strangely imply that the eastern empire is detached from the west, calling an alliance a form friendship rather than asserting some sort of

unity or sameness, as the Gothic Kings had done. Even though the Gothic royalty portrays the eastern Romans in a positive light, this letter from the western Roman senate unveils a hidden truth: eastern Romans are thought of as being different. Throughout the *Variae* the western and eastern Roman Empires appear to have an unstable relationship. The western Romans are consistently seeking peace among the easterners, which sometimes forced their hand into a subordinate role in their attempt to reconcile with their eastern cousins.

Procopius: On the Outside Looking In

Context

Though the western empire suffered under a series of transient emperors, it finally found almost forty years of semi-stability under Theodoric.¹⁰⁰ When Procopius was documenting the *Wars*, Justinian was emperor of the eastern empire alongside Athalaric in the west. Anthony Kaldellis describes Justinian as being “the last Roman emperor of ecumenical importance and the last to claim a place among the famous rulers of antiquity.”¹⁰¹ Justinian wanted to restore the Roman Empire to its former glory, and much of his reign was inspired by the goal of the re-conquest of former Roman lands that had been lost to barbarian groups. Indeed, upon Amalasuntha’s death, Justinian seized the opportunity to take back Rome from the Gothic overlords.

According to Averil Cameron, Procopius “is the major Greek historian of late antiquity... he is both a traditional writer and a product of his age.”¹⁰² Little is known about his life, but it can be deduced that he was from an eastern upper class family from Caesarea in Palestine.¹⁰³ Procopius wrote three major works, all in Greek: the *Secret History*, *Wars of Justinian*, and *On the Buildings*. All three are heavily influenced by the reign of Justinian and highlight criticisms of Justinian or his policies. His writing style often relied on classical authors, and the *Wars* in particular show the influence of classical literature in his writings. The *Wars*, which is the text used for this analysis, was

¹⁰⁰ Please see Cassiodorus context section for contemporary western context.

¹⁰¹ Kaldellis, *Procopius of Caesarea*, 1

¹⁰² Cameron, *Procopius*, 3

¹⁰³ Cameron, *Procopius*, 5

most likely completed around 550/1 AD.¹⁰⁴ This narrative was “designed to be both comprehensible and useful to future generations.”¹⁰⁵

Procopius' *Wars* not only reflected criticisms of the eastern empire, but also criticisms on the western Romans and how he interpreted the Goth's attitudes and actions towards the east. Like Cassiodorus, Procopius' used the Goths as mouthpieces of the western Romans. Undoubtedly, the thoughts and opinions of the Goths about their claim to the west represented similar thoughts upheld by the western Romans. Whether or not Procopius recorded true words or events in history is not particularly relevant for this examination. The words he puts into the mouths of the Goths and the actions he depicts reflect some picture of what Procopius thought the Goths thought about him and other eastern Romans; or rather, how he wants his audience to think about how the Goths think about the eastern Romans.

Procopius' Wars of Justinian

In the *Wars* there are three different classifications of Roman people: those who live in the city of Rome, the eastern Romans (like himself), and the ancient Romans.¹⁰⁶

Otherwise, either to prevent confusion or to make a statement about the western empire, he refers to people living in the western empire as Italians, Goths, Franks and so on.

Procopius often called the Ostrogoths, the enemy of the Romans in books five through eight, “barbarians.” Unlike Cassiodorus, Procopius wrote that the lands of the west were practically stolen from the former empire. He described Theodoric, whom the west

¹⁰⁴ Cameron, *Procopius*, 8

¹⁰⁵ Kaldellis, *Procopius of Caesarea*, 19

¹⁰⁶ Where does ancient stop?

praised as a Roman savior, as a usurper in name who was, however, also “truly an emperor no less than any who have distinguished themselves in the office from the beginning.”¹⁰⁷ Theoderic, unlike Odoacer, was a usurper who had the consent of the eastern emperor, and was therefore made legitimate in the west and in the eyes of Procopius.

After Theoderic’s death the relationship between the eastern Romans and the Goths became tense. Justinian often attempted to take back the land from the Goths. Amalasuntha¹⁰⁸ even “wanted to hand the power of the Goths and Italians over to the emperor Justinian” once Theodahad began to act against her. Responding to a letter from Justinian, Amalasuntha criticized the emperor for disputing with Athalaric.¹⁰⁹ She reminded Justinian that the Goths not only “not hinder [him] but quite eagerly even gave [him] free passage against the enemy... and a multitude of horses” which she claimed “enabled [him] to defeat the enemy.”¹¹⁰ Amalasuntha referred to the eastern Romans as friends and allies, and when she claimed that Lilybaeum is rightfully Gothic in her letter, Procopius added that she secretly “agreed to put all of Italy into his [Justinian’s] hands.”¹¹¹ However, before this officially happened and Justinian could claim Rome, Theodahad killed her.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Procopius, *Wars*, V.1.29

¹⁰⁸ Amalasuntha, daughter of Theoderic, and co-reign with Theodahad. See Cassiodorus section for more context. Procopius, *Wars*, V.3.12

¹⁰⁹ Son of Amalasuntha and grandson of Theoderic.

¹¹⁰ The enemy here are the Vandals. Procopius, *Wars*.V.3.22

¹¹¹ “Yet, we do not justly call someone a friend and ally merely for offering an alliance to his neighbors” though with conditional implications, Amalasuntha still refers to eastern Romans as friends and allies. Procopius, *Wars*, V.3.23 and 28

¹¹² Theodahad was Theoderic’s nephew.

Theodahad negotiated to give Sicily to Justinian. This land transaction was only the beginning of the settlement, as Theodahad, in order to avoid a war, agreed to:

“Send him [Justinian] also a golden crown every year weighing three hundred liters and up to three thousand Gothic warriors, whenever [Justinian] wished it; *that* Theodahad himself would have no authority to execute any priest or senator, or to confiscate his property to the public treasury except by decision of the emperor; [3] *that* if Theodahad wanted to advance any of his subjects to the patrician or other senatorial rank, this would not be done by him but he would ask the emperor to bestow it; [4] *that* the Roman populace, in acclaiming their sovereign, would always chant the name of the emperor [Justinian] first and then that of Theodahad, in the theatres, hippodromes, and wherever else it was necessary for such a thing to be done; [5] *that* no statue of bronze nor of any other material would ever be set up to Theodahad alone, but statues must always be made for both, and they must stand thus: on the right that of the emperor, and on the other side that of Theodahad.”¹¹³

This new agreement established that Theodahad would bow to the emperor and assented to imperial dominance. Justinian stripped Theodahad of any individual glory he might receive on behalf of the Roman people. Soon after this, Theodahad simply wanted “to hand over to [Justinian] forthwith the state of the Goths and Italians,” so long as Theodahad continues to profit off of the land.¹¹⁴ Both Amalasuntha and Theodahad agree to give Roman-Gothic lands to Justinian, but Theodahad even agreed complete imperial submissive where there would be no doubt that Justinian held more authority in the empire than his Gothic counter part.

Amid these negotiations, however, Justinian sent envoys led by Maurikios, to Salona, Italy. The battle was violent, Maurikios was killed along with almost all of the Romans accompanying him, the mission was a failure and the remaining Romans returned home. Theodahad was relived when he heard the commander of the envoys had been killed saying, “for men have decreed that an evoy may justly be killed when is found to have

¹¹³ Procopius, *Wars*. V.6.2-5

¹¹⁴ Procopius, *Wars*. V.6.19

insulted a sovereign,” and also insinuated that this event may lead to the eastern ambassador Peter’s, death.¹¹⁵ After this defeat, Justinian then gave a message to the Goths stating that the emperor wanted “to receive [the Goths] back into our [the Roman] republic... we are not inviting the Goths to enter into strange or alien customs but those of a people with whom you were once familiar.”¹¹⁶ This statement reflects the idea that Gothic culture and Roman culture had become merged, and Justinian was trying to remind the Goths of this in order to prevent them from becoming too enraged by the envoy he sent.

Theodahad, however, did not concede to Justinian’s terms, so in retaliation, Justinian sent Konstantianos to lead an army to Illyria and for Belisarios “to enter Italy with all speed and treat the Goths as enemies.”¹¹⁷ The declaration of war reveals that Justinian does not view the Goths as Romans, but rather as illegitimate rulers of Italy. Through Justinian’s offer to take back the Goths into the republic, it can be assumed that Theodahad did want and think he and his people were the rightful rulers of Italy, but from Theodahad’s response, it can be seen that he views the eastern emperor as a threat, and not an ally or counter part to his empire.

Belisarius charged through Italy, and reached Naples (for the first time). The Neapolitans sent Stephanus to speak on their behalf and accuse Belisarius for “not acting justly” because he was “marching against men who are Romans and have done no wrong.”¹¹⁸ Stephanus also added that if Belisarius takes Rome then the people will be

¹¹⁵ Procopius, *Wars*, V.7.15

¹¹⁶ Procopius, *Wars*, V.7.24

¹¹⁷ Procopius, *Wars*, V.7.26

¹¹⁸ Procopius, *Wars*, V.8.7

subject to him, but if he fails then he would not be able to keep the city. The Neapolitans do not seem to think that the eastern Romans have any claim over the city, and are even subject to lose it if they fail to capture Rome. I would argue that the Neapolitans, at least through this exchange, do not necessarily believe that Naples belongs under eastern rule. Belisarius responded by promising the Neapolitans that if they receive the eastern army into their city, then it would secure their freedom and the freedom of other Italians. Once this promise was made, the inhabitants of Naples were much more eager to accept Belisarius into the city, but then were dissuaded by the words of Pastor and Asclepiodotus (two other men of Naples). They claim that by letting Belisarius into the city would be a betrayal to the Goths who would be less forgiving if Belisarius lost.¹¹⁹ Belisarius had to wager his wage into the city from the start, showing again a divide among the Italians and eastern Romans. If the Italians had seen them as being part of one whole, then they would have immediately sided with the easterners. Despite refusal from the Neapolitans Belisarius invaded the city, and the Goths desperately sent a request for aid to Theodahad, who turned his cheek at the request. Belisarius eventually sacked Naples in 536 and Procopius wrote, “on that day they both became captives and regained their liberty.”¹²⁰ The eastern Romans see Italy as part of their empire, and treat the people as free people under the emperor, but the Italians do not appear to share this view.

Due to Theodahad’s unwillingness “to engage [the Romans] in battle, [the Goths] felt among themselves much suspicion toward [Theodahad], believing he was deliberately betraying the cause of the Goths to the emperor Justinian and cared for

¹¹⁹ For full speech: Procopius, *Wars*, 8.29-40

¹²⁰ Procopius, *Wars*, V.10.35

nothing else” except his own wealth.¹²¹ The Goths decided to meet at Regata where they established a new king, Wittigis. Wittigis sent a Gothic man by the name of Optaris to “bring Theodahad alive or dead,”¹²² and after becoming upset over a petty love dispute, Optaris decided to slay Theodahad “like a victim for sacrifice.”¹²³

Belisarius marched onward to Rome, and Wittigis prepared his Goths prepared for war. Belisarius was able to persuade the Romans to side with his army, even as the Goths fought to defend their hold on the city. Belisarius sent commanders to every gate in the city to protect it from Gothic invasion. Wittigis, after a failed attempt to report a false attack, sent a messenger to the Salarian gate to “reproach the Romans for their faithlessness to the Goths and upbraided them for treason... they had committed against both their fatherland and themselves, for they had exchanged the power of the Goths for these Graeci who were not able to defend them, although [the Graeci] had never before seen any of them in Italy except as actors of tragedy, mimes, and thieving sailors.”¹²⁴ Wacca, who was Wittigis’ messenger and otherwise “a man of no mean station,” does not call Belisarius’ army a Roman one at all, but instead one of Graeci and relates the term with actions of “tragedy, mimes, and thieving sailors,” none of which are respectable positions in Roman culture.¹²⁵

During the of the war at Rome Wittigis, attempting to spark hope in his army as Belisarius takes the city, said:

¹²¹ Procopius, *Wars*, V.11.1

¹²² Procopius, *Wars*, V.11.6

¹²³ Procopius, *Wars*, V.11.9

¹²⁴ Procopius, *Wars*, V.18.40

¹²⁵ Procopius, *Wars*, V.18.39-40

“You will not only conquer your opponents most easily, few as they are and mere *Graeci*, but will also punish them for the injustice and insolence with which they treated us first. We boast that we are their superiors in valor, numbers, and every other respect; the audacity with which they come against us is due merely to elation at our misfortunes, and the only asset they have is hesitation we have shown. Their boldness is fed by their undeserved good fortune.”¹²⁶

Wittigis refers directly to the Roman army as *Graeci* and uses the term as derogatory name to make them appear less threatening compared to the Goths. In fact, Wittigis argues, the Roman army is only because the Goths are losing battles, not because the Roman army is actually stronger or better.

In December of 537 the Goths’ determination for battle waned as they “had suffered from both the pestilence and the enemy [Roman army]” and their numbers dwindled to only a few men.¹²⁷ The Goths try to end the war by sending an envoy to Belisarius with a “Roman of note” among the Gothic forces. In this exchange, the ambassadors do not call the easterners *Graeci* at all, but instead call them Romans, and also claim that Italy was rightfully and legitimately given to Theoderic. The term Roman is most likely employed because it was most beneficial not to offend Belisarius, and not a clear sign that the Goths have had a change of heart. In 540 Belisarius took Ravenna and Wittigis, made a treaty with the Goths, the Goths declared the Hildebad, a notable Ostrogoth, the new king and Belisarius took Wittigis with him to Constantinople.

Meanwhile, at the beginning of book seven, Gothic powers were destabilizing. When Hildebad heard that Belisarius left Ravenna, he assembled plans to form a rebellion. He began small with about a thousand men and held Pavia, but gained momentum for the movement and inhabitants of Liguria and Venice joined his cause. Justinian, around the same time, decided to impose “an absurd budget” on the people of

¹²⁶ Procopius, *Wars*, V.29.11-12

¹²⁷ Procopius, *Wars*, VI.6.1

Ravenna, causing the Italians to “become disaffected from the emperor Justinian.” As a result of this, none of the Italian soldiers would fight on behalf of Justinian, and this resilience aided the cause of the Goths. After a Gothic victory at the battle of Terviso, Justinian became aware of the Gothic threat Hildebad presented. There were troubles on the home front, however, Uraia, the nephew of Wittigis, got into a conflict that resulted in the death of Hildebad in 541. Upon Hildebad’s death, a Rugian Goth by the name of Erarius was named the new king by fellow Rugians.¹²⁸ The Goths did not agree with this arrangement because they considered Erarius unfit to lead an army against the Romans, and instead elevated Totila, the nephew of Hildebad, to the throne.

Justinian became concerned when he heard that Totila became king of the Goths, and “he began to rebuke and censure the commanders of the army there and did not let up.”¹²⁹ Thus, another war between the Goths and the Romans arose and the custody battle for Italy ensued.

The Italian citizens, still view themselves as being separate from the eastern empire. When Roman forces invade Naples for a second time, Konon¹³⁰ again convince the inhabitants to side with him, rather than the Gothic rulers.¹³¹ In book seven the Roman citizens desperately agree to side with Belisarius, but only because they had been

¹²⁸ “The Rugi are a Gothic nation but in ancient times they lived autonomously,” but were persuaded to be absorbed into the Ostrogothic nation under Theoderic. Procopius, *Wars*, VII.2.1-2

¹²⁹ Procopius, *Wars*, VII.3.1

¹³⁰ Konon is an eastern Roman general in Justinian’s army.

¹³¹ Procopius, *Wars*, V.8.13, Procopius, *Wars*, V.8.34-40

reduced to starvation.¹³² Later, when addressing the eastern Roman general Besses and Konon, the populace of Rome makes a defiant statement:

“As for us, generals, do not consider us to be either Romans or fellow-countrymen of yours, or even to have assimilated our ways of government to yours; and do not suppose that in the beginning we received the emperor’s army into the city willingly, but think of us as enemies from the start who took up arms against you and later, when defeated in battle, became your captive slaves according to the law of war.”¹³³

Here, the divide in the empire’s people becomes clear. The people of Rome do not want the eastern Romans to think that they are similar in any way, and even renounce the Roman name. The people of Rome would rather be slaves than be assimilated into Justinian’s empire. They side with Totila who agrees to free the people from the “most hated masters,”¹³⁴ and after a period of starvation.

In a letter to the Roman senate in 543, Totila uses the word *Graeci* to describe the eastern forces as Wittigis had. He asks the senate if they had believed that the “*Graeci* were benevolent towards their subjects,” and claims that Justinian’s attempt to retake Italy is an “absurd cause.”¹³⁵ As when the term was used by Wittigis and on behalf of Wittigis, it’s a label attributed to the eastern Romans when a Goth is trying to de-Romanize the easterners in order to gain the loyalty of the Italians. He uses the label again later in book seven when he is addressing his fellow Goths, and chastising the Romans for letting eastern forces into the city.¹³⁶

¹³² “Our current state must be the apology for our rashness, for it is reasonable to claim that there is no plight more intolerable for men than a life prolonged amid adversity. Procopius, *Wars*, VI.17

¹³³ Procopius, *Wars*, VII.5.5

¹³⁴ Procopius, *Wars*, VII.7.11-16

¹³⁵ Procopius, *Wars*, VII.9.10-18

¹³⁶ Procopius, *Wars*, VII.21.4-15

As the Gothic wars are coming to a close in 551 a Gothic speech reveals the true nature of this derogatory nature of calling someone a Greek (or *Graeci*). The Gothic commanders say to their men: “Show them, therefore, as quickly as possible that they are Greeklings, unmanly by nature, and that they are merely putting on a bold face when defeated, and do not allow this experiment of their to go further.”¹³⁷ A *Greekling*, literally means “little Greek,”¹³⁸ and in this case is directly related to unmanliness, and therefore do not deserve to win this war. Just as the Latin author Claudian claimed that Greekness was tied with femininity under Stilicho,¹³⁹ a Gothic commander does the same. This stereotype survived almost a hundred and fifty years later, and was so commonly used that a commander among the Goths would have been able to use it (or Procopius would have been made aware of this stereotype). This unmanliness disqualifies the eastern Romans from ruling Italy in the minds of the Goths, just as it had under Stilicho.

Conclusion

The Goths seem to think that they are the rightful rulers of Rome, and while in the *Wars* books five through eight they do not refer to themselves Roman, it is quite possible they view themselves as highly assimilated into the western empire and even maintain the laws of the Roman empire throughout Gothic reign. Once the Goths are threatened and the Gothic royal relations become unstable, they concede eastern superiority, but begrudgingly (none of the Goths succeed in giving Italy back to Justinian and as can be seen in this analysis it seems that the western Romans themselves are divided on the issue

¹³⁷ Procopius, *Wars*, VIII.23.25-26

¹³⁸ I do not think that by “little Greek” a Goth would mean little in comparison to the ancient Greeks, whom Theoderic praised. I think adding the little was just a way to emphasize the insult.

¹³⁹ Please see section one of this thesis for more information.

of siding with the east). After the death of Theodahad, the Goths are consistently at war with the Romans, and refer to them as Greek (*Graeci*, *Greekling*). They use Greek ethnicity as a way to belittle the Greeks, and also as a way to invalidate eastern army's Romanness in Italy. This may have been a rhetorical tactic used by the Goths in order to dissuade Italians from easily siding with the eastern army; if the easterners were not Roman, the Italians would have less reason to side with them in the war. The labels used toward the eastern army by the Goths are not consistent, however, I want to emphasize that existence of the stereotypes of the Greeks that are existing and being used.

Throughout the Gothic *Wars* in books five through eight the Italian support of the eastern army is fluid and usually dependent on who is winning at the time, and who would be more merciful. The people of Italy and Rome, however, defiantly dissent from Justinian nearing the end of the war. In the statement to Basses and Konon, these Romans would rather be stripped of all their rights than become citizens of Justinian's empire; perhaps revealing that these Romans think it would be better to be a slave than a citizen in the empire that Justinian has created.

Most importantly, the western Romans do not view the eastern Romans as being the same. Sometimes the easterners are enemies or allies, but nonetheless they are never one with the westerners. Under Justinian's [Belisarius'] army, the western Romans are forced to comply with the east. The reluctance to unify displays the disjunction between the two halves of the empire, and seems to exhibit almost two separate empires, but both claim to run on similar principles and similar foundations. The western Romans do not see their eastern counterparts as a continuation of the Roman Empire, but rather, different.

Wrapping Up

Conclusion

Both Claudian and Sidonius produced stereotypes of submissive eastern Romans in order to establish western dominance through panegyric. Claudian ultimately slandered the eastern Roman court, and criticized them for being too effeminate, which made them vulnerable to attack. Stilicho, despite being half-barbarian, was seen as the new savior of the empire, and Claudian wanted his audience to recognize that under Stilicho, the eastern Roman Empire could be saved and revived to their traditional manly Roman state. Sidonius rallied for western dominance despite writing a panegyric for the new western emperor, Anthemius, who was not only from the eastern empire but was even sent by the eastern emperor, Leo. Both authors employ opposing stereotypes about the eastern people in order to adapt to the contemporary political climate. In the first example, Stilicho sought to control the east and therefore needed Claudian to justify his authority over the eastern court, which was done by slandering the eastern consul into an effeminate corner and claiming that he was unfit to rule. The latter example

This submissive east and dominant west carried through the later fifth and early sixth centuries in the *Variae* of Cassiodorus, and also through the eastern and Gothic interactions in Procopius' *Wars* books five through eight. The *Variae* exhibited the autonomy of the Gothicized western empire when Theodoric and his successors all portray the west as fully under their rule, and viewed the east as more of an ally than a twin state. The Goths did not give the impression that they thought the west held dominance over the east, but did imply western independence and sovereignty from the

east, until they are under attack. In the *Wars of Justinian*, Procopius' reiterated this system when the eastern Romans interact with the Goths and Italians.

Often in this essay, the western Romans have cited the eastern Roman's Greekness. Many eastern Romans spoke Greek, while the western Romans spoke Latin, despite Greek culture heavily influencing Roman culture,¹⁴⁰ the Greek people had received disdain from the Romans as early as the first century. Dr. Benjamin Isaac suggests, "Romans themselves made a clear distinction between classical Greece and its heritage and their subjects, the contemporary Greeks."¹⁴¹ Even under Augustus, Syme expresses this idea: "Here as elsewhere the Principate of Caesar Augustus is double-faced. It stands as the firm champion of Italy against the East, yet it is a monarchy in the East. Nor can Rome even pretend to be hostile to everything that is Greek."¹⁴² Isaac also says that most Roman aristocrats 'despised' the Greeks, and "the idea that Rome was being corrupted by the wealth and decadence of Greece preceded views, more commonly attested afterwards, that such corruption was the result of the re-conquest of Asia."¹⁴³ In this study, it is not the re-conquest of Asia, but more likely the interactions between the eastern and western empires that caused a strain on the already existing racisms. Cato the Elder cites the Greeks as being "utterly vile and unruly," and always wanted the "banishment of all Greeks from Italy."¹⁴⁴ Isaac goes on to explain that "almost nobody in Rome describes any of the Greeks as fully functional in Roman terms... they are not

¹⁴⁰ Refer to letter from Theodoric where he admires all of the ancient Greek scholars in the Cassiodorus section.

¹⁴¹ Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 382

¹⁴² Syme, *Tacitus* (1958), 507

¹⁴³ Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 384

¹⁴⁴ Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 386

virile, courageous, or fierce. They do not have the simple, masculine values or Roman gravitas.”¹⁴⁵

The distrust and desire to dominate and/or separate the easterners in the fifth and sixth century most likely derived from these ancient stereotypes. As has been discussed in this essay, most of these authors had a classical education and would have been made aware of these stereotypes early on. Not only had they been introduced to this racism, but they also lived in a divided empire, which would inevitably destabilize. The tensions grew from the fifth century and when the Goths conquered Italy, the western Romans saw themselves as entirely different from their former eastern counterparts. In the end, the western Romans tried to claim the Roman title and deem the eastern Romans “Greeks” instead, but Justinian adamantly tries to reconquer and reclaim the Roman title by forcing the Goths to submit themselves to his rule. There is no doubt, however, that bias towards the east stimulated submissive slander and the political rhetoric generated heavily divided the empire, and caused disunity among the Romans.

¹⁴⁵ Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 405

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